



Meet your restaurant's extended family: regulars



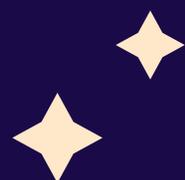


Too many restaurants think once the check has cleared after a meal, it's on to acquire the next new guest. In doing so, they miss out on the opportunity and value of regulars or repeat guests.

People are more than eager to get back to dining, making now a prime time to bring in more regulars and create a community—online and in-person—of super fans.

To help get you started with turning one-time guests into regulars, we put together this quick guide covering:

- **Who regulars are and why they matter**
- **How to understand what keeps regulars coming back**
- **Ways to grow your community of engaged loyalists**



Who are regulars and why do they matter?

Restaurants are notorious for building relationships with guests, they naturally develop a group of regulars—guests who visit often, maybe order the same things consistently, and recommend the restaurant to friends and family. Regulars can be likened to a restaurant’s extended family, and they are incredibly valuable.

So, why do regulars really matter? There are a few important reasons:

81%

of people trust recommendations from family and friends over those from companies*

*Based on Hubspot ²⁰¹⁸ research: "[The Hard Truth About Acquisition Costs \(and How Your Customers Can Save You\)](#)"

1. Bringing current guests back costs less than acquiring new ones. In fact, acquiring new customers can be anywhere from 5 to 25 times more expensive than retaining prior customers, according to [Harvard studies](#). That’s a high premium!

2. Regulars often buy and spend more. It’s no surprise, but your loyal following loves your restaurant and can’t get enough! In recent research from [Paytronix](#), loyal diners (including diners who are part of loyalty programs) spent more than twice as much on takeaway in 2020 compared to non-loyal diners.

3. Word of mouth recommendations from repeat diners is your best marketing channel. According to [research from HubSpot](#), 81% of people trust recommendations from family and friends over those from companies, making your regulars a premier acquisition channel for your restaurant.



Understand what keeps your regulars coming back

The buzzword “personalisation” boils down to guests wanting to be recognised and remembered as individuals. For regulars who are consistently supporting your business and maybe even your biggest super fans, this recognition is that much more important.

Regular guests may return for various reasons, and your restaurant data can unlock the mystery of why individual people come back, so you can cater to their individual needs and keep them as strong advocates. Consider these ways to uncover deeper insights:

1. Ask for feedback. Whether it’s custom surveys or sourcing online feedback from review sites like Google, OpenTable, and Facebook, find out what regulars love most about your restaurant, directly from them!

2. Build comprehensive guest profiles. Bring all your guests’ preference and behaviour data, like past feedback provided, or order history (like their most-ordered red wine), into a single view, so your whole team can better understand and meet the individual needs of your guests. That could mean the difference between aptly recommending that Pinot Noir the guest will love, or missing the opportunity altogether.

3. Identify trends that motivate regulars. Based on guest feedback, preferences, and actionable reporting, you can see patterns of what brings regulars in. It might be your menu, the way you celebrate special occasions, or even what’s happening in your neighbourhood.

John Smith

Phone: (866) 951-7154
Email: johnsmith@OT.com
Birthday: January 27

Timeline
All (5) Visits (3) Orders (0) Reviews (4) Emails (2)

Tuesday, March 3, 2020
Dined - George's Steakhouse - Houston
Check 2559 for \$571.50 at table 2
Served by Ludwig Manukian

Saturday, November 30, 2019
Dined - Olive - NYC
Check 1136 for \$390.00 at table 52
Served by Christine Beauchamp

Saturday, September 16, 2017
Email - johnsmith@OT.com
Hello, again.
Not opened

Tuesday, June 27, 2017
Email - johnsmith@OT.com
Mother's Day at Lincoln | May 14th
Not opened

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Guest Intel
Total visits: 3
Total spend: \$961.50
Last visit date: 1/10/2020
Last visit venue: Nick & Stef's Steakhouse - LA
Visits past year: 2
Spend past year: \$961.50
Average dinner cover spend: \$137.36
Average overall cover spend: \$137.36
Top items: **DINNER MENU | Fresh Still |
**Fusi | *Mushrooms | Diet coke

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Notes:

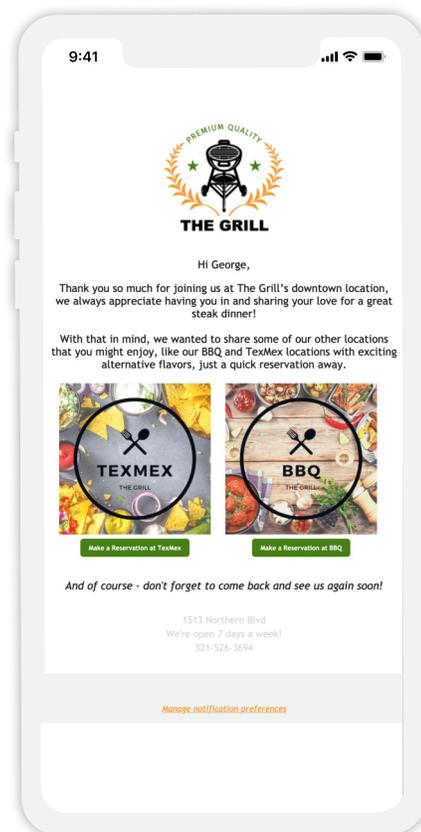
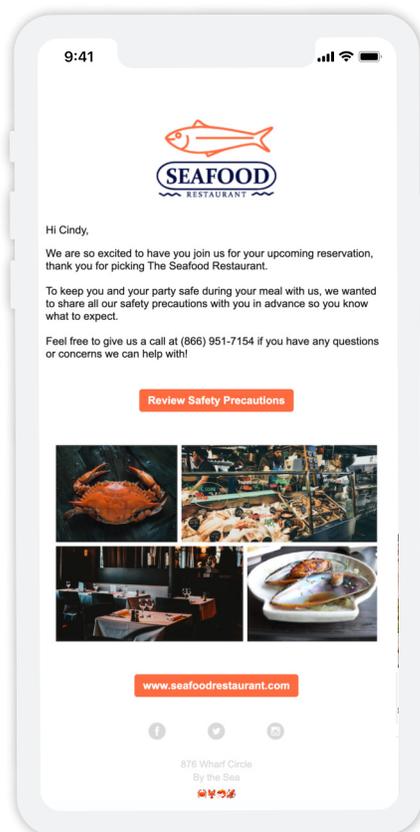
Grow your community of engaged loyalists

Now that we've identified the true value of regulars and how to find them, it's time to grow your community of engaged loyalists. Below are some great ways to get started:

1. Personalise at every opportunity, on every medium. A deeper understanding of guests makes welcoming them as part of the extended family seamless. Simple things - like saying hello to every guest by name, giving thoughtful recommendations based on past orders, or even sending emails so apt to their tastes, guests look forward to opening them!

2. Connect with the right guest at the right time, consistently. No two diners are the same, so carry personalisation through to your engagement to keep things relevant. That might mean letting your steak lovers know of the new season menu option, or showcasing some of your other offerings and locations they may enjoy. Regardless of the approach, stay in touch often to keep your restaurant top of mind.

3. Consider experiential loyalty. Rather than discounts and points, surprise and delight your regulars. Consider offering them a special tasting menu with the chef on their 5th visit, or the best table in the house (with their favourite wine already waiting at the table) for their 10th visit. Get creative, and think of what the individual guest would appreciate most.



Anticipating and meeting the needs of your regulars will pay off, and even grow your loyal following. The good news is, it doesn't have to be impossible work.

Join the most reliable, easy-to-use restaurant management platform. Manage your operations in one place and get guests when you need them most.

Get started with OpenTable today

